

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 20, 2014

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, #112, Town Hall, with the following members present: L. Pitman, J. Burke, D. Bruce, D. DiCenso, M. Iwanowicz, J. Lowre, T. Williams, J. Denneen, D. Crowley, P. Hinton, A. Healy, S. Lawson. Absent were C. Lane, S. Ahmed and J. McDermott. Also in attendance was Town Administrator M. Boynton, Finance Director M. Thompson, Town Accountant, Fire Chief T. Bailey.

7:30 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman L. Pitman

May 5, 2014 Spring Annual Town Meeting

Schools Budget – Present were School Committee Chairman N. Gallivan, School Superintendent L. Lynch, Assistant Superintendent J. Kenney, Business Manager M. Friscia, L. McKelligan, Director of Special Education. Chairman Gallivan spoke to the FY2015 budget request is for \$39,020,811, and increase of \$1,207,198 (3.2%) Budget is driven by collective bargaining contracts of \$812,082(2.6%). The increase in salary schedule due to restructured. Increase in student ridership required two additional school buses, plus anticipate new bus contract of \$114,607 (16% increase) Special Ed mandates amounted to \$151,403 (6% increase) \$70,000 (10%) for instructional supplies. Technology software in the amount of \$45,950 (31%).

Current difference between the 1.2 million, 3.2% projected increase for current levels of staffing and drivers leaves a budget gap of \$642,451. Town Administrator's budget allocation of \$38,378,360 (increase of \$564,747 or 1.5%). Last year's school budget increased \$1,282,000 (3.5%).

Chairman Gallivan spoke to the cost of living increase of 1.2%. On the salary schedule, steps have increased from 13 to 17. For course work, applicants have to apply and it is paid out of a pool of money, amount that is paid depends on the number of applicants, usually around 30. Contract is for three years and is a 2 1/2 % increase for salaries. School Committee is attempting to get the information out and close the gap of \$630,000, and are looking at revenue sources. Capital Budget is for building and technology. They attempt to manage with a reasonable increase. They desire to compete well with surrounding communities, have goals for improvements, particularly in mathematics. On the mandates, they need more professional development, also the need to purchase new materials. They decide on their own professional developments, The \$600,000 is a misunderstood number. Some are not salary items but are recurring costs. It comes back to what the priorities are.

Common Core – Different way to teach, testing is done within a month and is on line in three schools. New approach is the right thing to do, standards need to get higher than what Massachusetts is doing.

Committee spoke to some groups opposing it, and allowing the parents to opt out. This is an unfunded mandate. Schools receive only \$25/pupil for it.

Superintendent Lynch spoke to 4% increase on lanes and 2% on steps on salaries. In order to get course reimbursement, it has to be relevant to the position. S. Lynch spoke to being disappointed with the math scores, but Walpole is still above the state average, they are looking into new tools, and addressing areas of strength and areas of weakness. He feels Common Core will help with MCATS scores.

FinCom Members spoke to so much being outside of control of School Department which the public is unaware. It is important to get the message out. Mandated costs have to come off the top, regular education gets what is left. This has to be communicated outside and interact with general public. 80% of the School Budget is salaries, 54% of the teachers dominate the negotiations.

Special Ed Director L. McKelligan provided an overview of Special Ed. Very complex, Community has an obligation to the child with disabilities, each child is evaluated to see if they qualify and determine eligibility. Need highly educated staff, and provides services to any student that resides in the Town of Walpole, both public and private from age 3 to 22. They are required to do the evaluating annually. They advertise in the newspaper informing parents of the programs. There is one teacher for every eight students, Special Ed is highly regulated. One autistic child costs \$50,000. It is felt that the investment pays off over the long run. There are mandates for teachers and aids, etc. If a parent appeals the school's decision there is a Special Ed Board of Appeals, if lose appeal, have to pay for their legal fees and the Schools. Budget fluctuates with students moving out of town and coming in to the town.

There are 640 special ed students of which 1/3 of the students are at the high school level. There are 37 out of district numbers. Program was developed in late 1980's. Program is federally mandated. Most of the students are genetic issues. Approximate cost of out of district placements is \$50,000/each. They will be looking for supplemental money in Article 5. FY15 budget request is \$2,890,289, difference of \$151,403 (65).

Superintendent Lynch spoke to the TEC Program moving to the Bird Office Building, they are talking about some additional programs. There are 16 towns involved in the TEC Program.

Committee discussed the \$642,000 shortfall of which \$247,000 is directly tied to wages, there is the need to find the additional monies. Town Administrator has to have a balanced budget for Town Meeting, adjustments can be made in the Fall when the State funding and new growth numbers are available in August. Superintendent Lynch spoke to presently there being a \$235,000 deficit in this year's budget, they will have to deal with this internally.

FinCom will meet with the School Committee on Monday, March 24, 2014 for further discussion on the School Budget.

Tri-County Budget

Original budget request was \$825,000, and request has been increased to \$851,156. There are approximately 66 students attending Tri-County

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Tri-County Budget in the amount \$851,156, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Norfolk County Agricultural School

\$24,000 being requested

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Norfolk County Agricultural School Budget in the amount of \$24,000, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Minutes

MOTION MADE by L. Pitman, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Minutes of March 3, 2014, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m., Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk